



# City of San Antonio

## Veterans Affairs Commission

Volume I, Issue I

April 2003



STAFF SUPPORT PROVIDED BY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

### Mission Statement

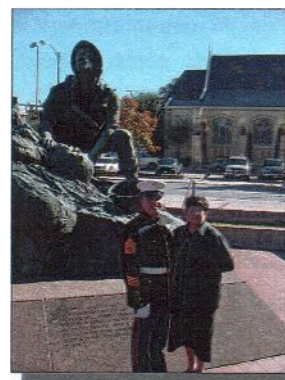
*The Veterans Affairs Commission will serve as the community's liaison and advocate for veteran affairs; advise the City Council on issues affecting San Antonio Veterans and their families; and make recommendations for improving services.*

### Chair's Message by Karen S. Rankin

Welcome to the first edition of the Veterans Affairs Commission (VAC) newsletter. We plan to publish a quarterly newsletter and are here to serve the veterans of San Antonio. Assisting us in our efforts is the City of San Antonio Economic Development Department.

What is a veteran? Those of us who served in the Armed Forces for considerable periods of time know the answer...anyone who served honorably for a period in excess of 180 days. But have you stopped to consider what that really means? What issues concern veterans, and who in San Antonio can help?

As previously stated, a veteran is anyone who served honorably for a period in excess of 180 days. But now, consider who fits into that description. A veteran could be a young man or woman who served only for 180 days or any period short of a full enlistment of 2, 3, 4, or 6 years. A veteran could also be someone who served in World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam or Desert Storm. A veteran could be



Karen S. Rankin  
Veterans Affairs Commission  
Chair, District 9  
&  
Reuben G. Sales  
District 7

a retired four star general. Why are those distinctions important?

For each group, the concerns are different. For the young veteran, jobs, education, child-care, and housing are foremost. For the more senior veterans, healthcare seems to be the primary issue. While there are many agencies, city, state, and federal that are set up to provide assistance and services to the veteran, many veterans do not know where to go for answers and assistance. (Cont'd. on page 2)

### Earn As You Learn by Julian Oviedo

Apprentices can earn quality wages that increase as their knowledge and skills do. The need for skilled workers is critical to the success of any business. The U. S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training in cooperation with individual State Apprenticeship Agencies are authorized by the National Apprenticeship Act, to oversee the apprenticeship system. This training system, which is geared to produce highly skilled workers, ensures quality training by combining on-the-job training with theoretical and practical classroom instruction to help prepare employees and employers to meet the demands of com-

peting in today's Global Economy.

With over 37,000 registered apprenticeship programs, and over 440,000 registered apprentices throughout the United States, apprenticeship is not only successful, but is continually expanding to other more non-traditional occupational areas. While the bulk of apprenticeship programs are currently in construction and manufacturing trades, non-traditional apprenticeships in fields such as; Healthcare, Child-care, Social Services, Communications and Information Technology have also been targeted for apprenticeship programs. (Cont'd. on p. 4)

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## Chair's Message: (Cont'd.) by Karen S. Rankin

**T**he job of the City of San Antonio Veterans Affairs Commission is twofold: to provide the City Council with advice and information about issues of concern to San Antonio veterans and their families, and secondly to provide San Antonio veterans with a voice and focal point for their issues. Each of the 11 commissioners is appointed to help achieve those goals. Should you need help or have questions, please do not hesitate to e-mail us at [nancys@sanantonio.gov](mailto:nancys@sanantonio.gov), or call us at 210.207.8204, or attend one of our meetings (held on the third Monday of each month in the Municipal Plaza "C" Room, 114 W. Commerce, corner of Commerce and South Flores). ■



City Council Veterans Affairs Commission Members

## Bexar County Veterans Service Office is Here to Service Veterans By Craig Erickson

**T**he Bexar County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) is available to assist all veterans, their dependents and survivors in filing claims for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and the State of Texas, to include disability compensation, VA pensions and burial benefits. The office also assists veterans in obtaining military records, such as DD Forms 214, and in processing requests for corrections to military records and discharge upgrades.

As the County Veterans Service Officer, my primary job is to help veterans and their families complete the necessary forms and submit the appropriate documents to the Department of Veterans Affairs to apply for benefits. Another of my duties is to educate the veterans of Bexar County about the benefits they are entitled to. One recent change affects veterans who performed duty in the country of Vietnam during the Vietnam wartime period. Any of these veterans who have since been diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes, prostate cancer, and other cancers and diseases specified by the DVA, may be eligible for service-connected benefits based on the presumption that the diseases resulted from exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides. In other words, you do not need to show proof that the disease existed or was treated while you were on active duty.

The Bexar County Veterans Service Office is located in Room 540 of the Vista Verde Plaza Building at 233 N. Pecos, which is the access road of Interstate 35 South, between W. Martin and W. Houston Streets. Our office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can be reached by phone at 210.335.6737 or by e-mail at [vets@bexar.org](mailto:vets@bexar.org). In addition, please visit our Web site at [www.bexar.org](http://www.bexar.org) (Veterans Services). Veterans are encouraged to call or e-mail before visiting the office in order to ensure that staff is available. Either Melissa Castillo, Office Assistant, or myself will be glad to speak with you. Please mail any forms that are necessary. We can often answer questions on the phone, or refer you to the appropriate agency, and therefore, preclude a visit our the office. ■



**Bexar County Veterans  
Service Office Assists  
In More Than One Way**

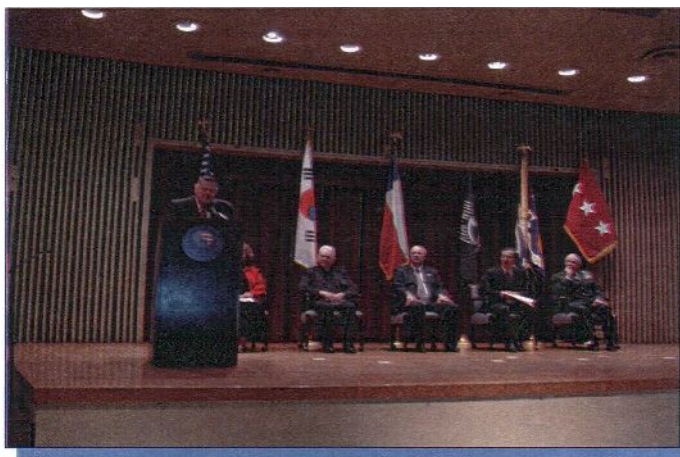


## 50th Anniversary of The Korean War by Richard E. Gonzales, Jr.

More than 1,200 citizens gathered at La Villita Assembly Hall to honor Texas Korean War Veterans who served during the Korean War from June 25, 1950 thru July 27, 1953. The Honorable Yang Bong-Ryull, Consul General of South Korea, thanked the Texas Veterans for the sacrifices made in the name of freedom. Councilman Carroll W. Schubert, 9<sup>th</sup> District, City of San Antonio, made welcoming remarks followed by LTG Freddy C. McFarren, Commanding General, Fifth U.S. Army, who was the distinguished speaker. Colonel Richard E. Gonzales, Jr. AUS (Retired) presented the keynote address "Freedom is not Free". Colonel Gonzales also emphasized that "The land of the free will remain only as long as America remains the land of the brave". Recipients of the Republic of Korea War Service medal were: Johanna Butt, U.S. Army Nurse Corps; Richard E. Gonzales, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps; Harold Risener, U.S. Navy; Harry Woodville, U.S. Air Force; Johnny Camp, U.S. Coast Guard and Oscar Cortez, U.S. Army, Repatriated Prisoner of War. The Department of Defense Commemoration Committee, in conjunction with the City of San Antonio and its Veterans Affairs Commission produced this 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Program. Many thanks are expressed to all other supporting agencies and organizations, for assisting in making this event an overwhelming success. For information on how to obtain the "Korean War Service Medal," please contact the Bexar County Veterans Service Office at 210.335.6737. ■



City Council Proclamation for 50th Anniversary of Korean War



Colonel Richard E. Gonzales, Jr. AUS (Retired) presents keynote address "Freedom is not Free"



LTG Freddy C. McFarren, Commanding General, Fifth U.S. Army presents award to Colonel Richard E. Gonzales, Jr.



## Earn As You Learn: (Cont'd.) by Julian Oviedo

These programs are available to employers, high school graduates, dislocated workers, veterans, people looking for a career change, and many others. Apprenticeships offer a stepping-stone to a successful and rewarding future. Average starting wages vary on the location and area of the program. In the San Antonio area it can range from \$7.50 to \$9.25 an hour for first-year apprentices with little or no occupational experience. The great majority of apprenticeship programs offer the standard array of employee benefits, but vary depending on the size of the organization, or company sponsoring the program. Apprentice wages increase at regular intervals as they acquire job experience and knowledge. Program graduates are awarded a nationally recognized certification from the United States Department of Labor.

Currently, there are over 855 occupations in a multitude of industries that are recognized as apprenticeable, and more are being added all the time. Qualifications will vary according to the individual program, however all registered apprenticeship programs require applicants to

meet minimum age requirements (generally, 18 years and up), and be physically able to perform the requirements of the job. Most registered apprenticeship programs require a high school diploma or an equivalent certificate (GED), and/or the completion of some high school level mathematics or science courses.

Apprentices are selected on the basis of qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Similar to the normal employment application process, the actual selection is done by members of a local apprenticeship committee, or the sponsoring employer. For more information on Registered Apprenticeship Programs, or the application process, you may contact Mr. Julian Oviedo, Apprenticeship & Training Representative, at the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship & Training Office in San Antonio, at 210.308.4594 or e-mail [joviedo@doleta.gov](mailto:joviedo@doleta.gov). ■



Updates from Washington, D.C.

## Operation Iraqi Freedom San Antonio SITREP by Karen S. Rankin

This is the first iteration of a special Veterans Affairs Commission Newsletter item which will help the City focus interest on those hometown heroes who have been deployed in response to Operation Iraqi Freedom. For those of you who do not follow military jargon, SITREP is an acronym for Situation Report.

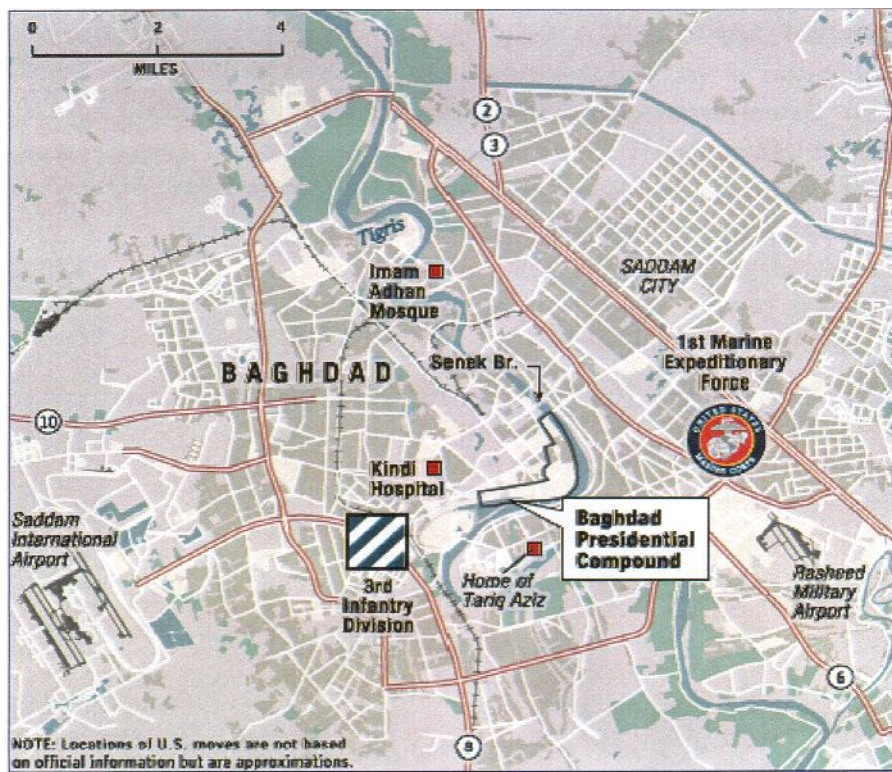
This SITREP is as of 31 Mar 03:

### Active Reservists or Guardsmen

- ★ 357 City of San Antonio Employees
- ★ 98 Citizens Deployed

Annually, the Veterans Administration spends over \$600M in Bexar County. There are nearly 174,000 veterans in Texas. In Bexar County, there are about 154,000 veterans; approximately 10% are women.

On March 30th, San Antonio Medal of Honor winner Lucien Adams died at age 80. ■





## Purple Heart's Stamp to Honor War Heroes by Garland Bishop & Nancy Sheppard

**T**he Military Order of the Purple Hearts (MOPH) is a Congressionally Chartered National Service Organization comprised of veterans who have received the Purple Heart Medal for wounds and injuries received at the hands of an armed enemy of the United States. General George Washington presented the first three Medals to soldiers in 1782, and he is considered not only the Father of our Country, but the Founder of the Purple Hearts as well.

Mr. **Garland** (Pete) Bishop, **Commander** of The Alamo Chapter 1836 (largest Chapter within the USA), currently has members who fought at Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, Europe, Pacific, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Desert Storm and now Iraq.

The Alamo Chapter 1836 is extremely proud that **our** nation remembers their injuries and other sacrifices in war, and is proud to be involved in the issuance of the Purple Heart's Stamp. They have been working with their National Headquarters and the local Post Office to coordinate having a ceremony in San Antonio

for the new Postage Stamp. The Veterans Affairs Commission thanks Mr. Garland (Pete) Bishop, Commander Chap. 1836, MOPH, for bringing this to their attention. They are honored to assist in the ceremonial plans tentatively **scheduled** for late May 2003 (23rd, 24th, or 25th). Further details will follow as they become available. For questions, please contact Mr. Bishop at 497-3029 or via e-mail at [garlandB@earthlink.net](mailto:garlandB@earthlink.net), or you can also contact Nancy Sheppard at 210.207.8204 or e-mail her at [nancys@sanantonio.gov](mailto:nancys@sanantonio.gov). ■





## Jobs & Education by John Cavazos

**O**n June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the "Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944," better known as the "GI Bill of Rights." Presently known as the Montgomery GI BILL, veterans have a host of educational benefits that they can use to further their skills or education. In addition to GI BILL monies, there are also a number of agencies to assist you in your educational needs. The most important being the following GI BILL phone number and Web site at:

1-888-GIBILL-1 and [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)

Most, if not all, college campuses have a VA department solely for veterans with counselors ready to assist you. In fact, as a former San Antonio College student, I had the privilege of being assisted by one of the finest VA counselors in Alamo Community College District, Mr. James M. DeMasi. As a Veteran himself, Mr. DeMasi understands the complexities of the paperwork needed to receive educational benefits.

He can be contacted at:

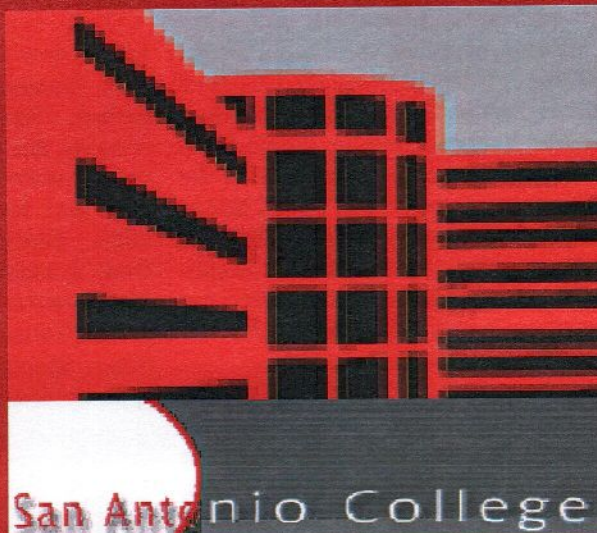
San Antonio College  
Veterans Affairs Department  
Mr. James M. DeMasi, M.S. Ed  
Counselor/Coordinator  
1300 San Pedro Avenue  
San Antonio, Texas 78212  
210.733.2327  
[Jdemasi@accdvm.accd.edu](mailto:Jdemasi@accdvm.accd.edu)

There is no investment like investing in yourself. If you are a veteran and have the desire to go back to school, there are many well-qualified people willing to help you achieve your goal.

If you would like to learn more about the process of going to school on the GI BILL, drop me a line at 493-0020 or e-mail Nancy Sheppard at [nancys@sanantonio.gov](mailto:nancys@sanantonio.gov).

The following Web sites are provided for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve:

[www.esgr.org](http://www.esgr.org)  
[www.military.com](http://www.military.com)



### LISTED BELOW ARE OTHER VETERAN AFFAIRS COUNSELORS IN SAN ANTONIO AREA CAMPUSES

VETERAN AFFAIRS COUNSELORS		
San Antonio College	James M. DeMasi	733-2327
St. Philip's College	John W. Westerbeck	531-3540
Palo Alto College	Robert J. Ramirez	921-5315
Northwest Vista College	Edmundo Conchas	348-2040/2020
University of Texas at San Antonio	Robert Powers	458-4540
Our Lady of the Lake University	Bridgitta Martinez	431-3960
St. Mary's University	Brother James D. Billo	436-3551
University of Incarnate Word	Sharlene Lopez	829-6006
Webster University	Heidi Lynn	
	Fort Sam	226-3373
	Lackland AFB	674-0014
	Randolph AFB	658-0707



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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[http://sachamber.org/The\\_Chamber\\_Today.html](http://sachamber.org/The_Chamber_Today.html)

WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

**Exhibit:** "Requiem: By the Photographers Who Died in Vietnam and Indochina" by Horst Faas, Tim Page and George Eastman (House International Museum of Photography and Film).

**Date:** 03/11/03 thru 05/25/03

**Location:** The Institute of Texan Cultures

**Charge:** \$5 Adults; \$2 children (3-12) & free under 2; \$3 seniors; \$3 military personnel w/I.D.  
210.458.2330 or [www.texancultures.utsa.edu](http://www.texancultures.utsa.edu)

## Exhibit Event

"U.S. Air Force Pararescue Mission and Role in Vietnam" by Fernando Cortez, curator of the History and Traditions Museum, Lackland Air Force Base.

**Date:** 05/04/03

**Time:** 2:00 p.m.

**Event::** Purple Heart Stamp Ceremony

**Date:** 05/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Event::** Veterans Affairs Commission Meeting

**Date:** 05/19/03

**Time:** 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Municipal Plaza Building, "C" Room.

**Event:** Memorial Day Ceremony

**Date:** 05/26/03

**Time:** 9:30 a.m.

**Location:** Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery

**Event:** Randolph Air Show

**Date:** 11/01/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** Randolph Air Show

**Event:** Celebration of America's Military (CAM) Week Opening Event

**Date:** 11/03/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Event:** CAM Golf Tournament

**Date:** 11/04/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Event:** CAM La Villita Evening Event

**Date:** 11/05/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Event:** Air Force Association CAM Combat Breakfast

**Date:** 11/06/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Event:** Association of the US Army CAM Luncheon

**Date:** 11/06/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Event:** Veteran's Parade

**Date:** 11/08/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Event:** Veteran's Day Ceremonies Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery

**Date:** 11/10/03

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD





City of San Antonio  
Economic Development Department  
Veterans Affairs Commission  
P.O. Box 839966  
San Antonio, TX 78238-3966

**FOR QUESTIONS OR TO BE ADDED TO THE  
MAILING LIST :**

Phone: 210.207.8204  
Fax: 210.207.8151

***"Addressing Veterans Issues  
in the Community"***

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
**WWW.SANANTONIO.GOV/EDD**

**CITY COUNCIL VETERANS AFFAIRS  
COMMISSION MEMBERS**



Karen S. Rankin, Chair	District—9
Richard E. Gonzales, Jr.	District—5
Vice Chair	
Julian Oviedo	District—1
John B. Cavazos	District—Mayor
Roy Lee	District—2
Ralph Zendejas	District—3
Felipe Torres	District—4
Irvin Padgett	District—6
Reuben G. Salas	District—7
Manuel S. Perez	District—8
Rojelio H. Garcia	District—10

**Services & Information Web sites for Veterans**

**Texas Workforce Web Site**

- Texas Workforce Commission (includes Governors Job Bank-State of Texas government jobs) — [www.twc.state.tx.us](http://www.twc.state.tx.us)

**Government Job Search Web Sites**  
(Federal, County, City)

- Veterans information-how to apply for federal jobs — [www.opm.gov/veterans/Index.htm](http://www.opm.gov/veterans/Index.htm)
- Federal Job Listings — [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afss](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afss)
- Air Force Civilian Jobs (CANS) — [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/palacecompass](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/palacecompass)
- Air Force Civilian Jobs/job kit — [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/palacecompass](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/palacecompass)
- Army Civilian Personnel — [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil)
- City of S.A. Job site — [www.sanantonio.gov/humres](http://www.sanantonio.gov/humres)
- Bexar County Job site — [www.co.bexar.tx.us](http://www.co.bexar.tx.us)

**Nationwide Job Search Web Sites**

- Nationwide job search — [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)
- America's job bank (AJB) — [www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us)

**Other Job Search Sites**

- Texas Employment Network — [www.warmsprings.org/WSRC/TEN/index.html](http://www.warmsprings.org/WSRC/TEN/index.html)
- San Antonio Job Network — [www.sajobnet.com](http://www.sajobnet.com)
- Southwest Research Institute — [www.swri.org](http://www.swri.org)
- UT Health Science Center — [www.uthscsa.edu](http://www.uthscsa.edu)
- State of Texas — [www.TexasOnline.com](http://www.TexasOnline.com)
- Bexar County — [www.bexar.org](http://www.bexar.org)
- City of San Antonio — [www.sanantonio.gov](http://www.sanantonio.gov)

**Veterans Information Web Sites**

- Department of Veterans Affairs — [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
- Texas Veterans Land Board — [www.glo.state.tx.us](http://www.glo.state.tx.us)
- Texas Veterans Commission — [www.tvc.state.tx.us](http://www.tvc.state.tx.us)
- Disabled American Veterans — [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org)
- Veterans of Foreign Wars — [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)
- The American Legion — [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)
- National Veterans Organization — [www.nva.org](http://www.nva.org)
- National Veterans Legal Services Program — [www.nvlsp.org](http://www.nvlsp.org)
- AMVETS — [www.amvets.org](http://www.amvets.org)
- NPRC (request for records) — [www.nara.gov/regional/mpr.html](http://www.nara.gov/regional/mpr.html)
- The Retired Enlisted Association — [www.trea.org](http://www.trea.org)
- The Retired Officers Association — [www.troa.org](http://www.troa.org)
- National Center for PTSD — [www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)
- National Committee for Employer Support of Guard and Reserve — [www.esgr.org](http://www.esgr.org)

**Veterans Job Search Web Sites**

- A Veterans Employment & Resource Service — [www.veteran.net](http://www.veteran.net)
- Transition Assistance Online — [www.taonline.com](http://www.taonline.com)
- VFW Job Web site — [www.vetjobs.com](http://www.vetjobs.com)
- DOL Veterans Reference Program — [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)